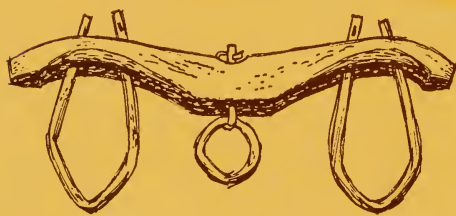


973.7L63
GF42a

Fess, Simeon D

Abraham Lincoln

LINCOLN ROOM
UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS
LIBRARY



MEMORIAL
the Class of 1901

founded by
HARLAN HOYT HORNER
and
HENRIETTA CALHOUN HORNER

ABRAHAM LINCOLN



ADDRESS BY
HONORABLE SIMEON D. FESS

United States Senator from Ohio

BEFORE
THE UNION LEAGUE
OF PHILADELPHIA

FRIDAY EVENING, FEBRUARY 15, 1924

ABRAHAM LINCOLN

PRESIDENT E. PUSEY PASSMORE: Gentlemen of The Union League: At this season of the year one's thoughts naturally turn to Lincoln, about whom cluster many of the finest traditions of The Union League. Founded in the dark days of civil strife to aid the War President in his effort to preserve the Union, this organization feels a particular call to commemorate in some fitting way the anniversary of the birth of the great Emancipator. All that has to do with Lincoln finds a sympathetic hearing here and lies close to the hearts of those who have a real affection for The Union League.

Some great writer has said Lincoln was the first American to rise to the heights of one of the world's immortals. Strange as it may seem, through all the generations that have passed since his day, with their trials and tribulations, we have never seen his peer. As a recent author expresses it: "History reveals no counterpart of Abraham Lincoln. In body, heart, soul, and mind, as well as in the fateful career that God marked out for him, the world has had no other like him among all its sons who have led mankind, from Eden to Versailles." [Applause.]

To-night to speak to us on the humanity of Lincoln, The Union League has the privilege of having as its guest of honor the distinguished son of that mother of

Presidents, our neighboring State of Ohio. While we are grateful to him for coming to us to-night, I like to fancy that he has found some pleasure in getting away from the tumultuous situation at Washington, with its Teapot Dome, its Veterans' Bureau, and other unsavory investigations, important and necessary, I regret to say, as they seem to be, to spend a few hours with us in this now absolutely safe city, the Butlerized City of Brotherly Love. [Laughter.]

A former President of Antioch College, Honorable Simeon D. Fess, has for a number of years represented his State in Congress. He is now one of the dependable pillars of the Republican Party in the United States Senate. [Applause.] To us who believe we are a part of the backbone of the great political party to which we all subscribe, it is gratifying in these trying times to realize our party is represented in the Senate by a number of tried and true statesmen who can be depended upon to keep their feet on the ground and to lend powerful support to a great President upon whose capable shoulders the hand of Fate has laid the heavy responsibilities of the Chief Magistrate of the Nation.

Of that stalwart group upon whom the best that is in the Republican Party confidently rely, is Senator Fess, the guest of the evening, whom I now have the honor to introduce to you. [Applause.]

HONORABLE SIMEON D. FESS: Mr. President and Members of The Union League: The introduction of my good friend is rather complimentary, and if I could only live up to the standard he sets, I would not be

embarrassed, but it is pretty difficult under the present status over in the Capitol, where everybody is looking for the spots on the sun, for us to keep our equilibrium; and I confess that there was much in his suggestion of coming away from that atmosphere to get into this. I find myself somewhat embarrassed; anybody who is accustomed to speaking in either branch of Congress is always embarrassed when he comes before such a group as this, the contrast is so sharp. [Laughter.] In the first place, you are here present, and that is a very noticeable contrast; in the second place, you are quite respectful to the person who is going to talk to you, and that is also a sharp contrast.

When the President was speaking, I was reminded of having looked into the history of the movement of The Union League, especially with reference to this City, some years ago; and it is a beautiful conception that we are here commemorating the memory of the great Lincoln in this League, started as it was with the purpose in view that it has. If any one lacked patriotism, here would be a good place to have it re-vitalized; and I therefore express great gratification for the honor extended to me to be with you a little while, while this is not Lincoln night, yet so near the time of his anniversary.

I have tried in years past to place Lincoln in history, and to ascertain the grounds upon which he has taken this high place. He is different from any other character that I know of. Some men have their places fixed by their utterances, like the Bard of Avon or the great poets of mediæval times, or some singers

such as have blessed the world; while others do not depend upon what they have said but rather on their accomplishments, such as, for example, the wizard whose anniversary we have just celebrated, who made possible the lighting of this building almost as brilliantly as if it were in the daytime. He never needed to have said anything; all that was necessary for him to do to place himself in history was to accomplish what he did.

But a very few men of the world have both uttered great sentiments and done great deeds, and they therefore have a double basis for their recognition. Any student of the Civil War times must recognize that Lincoln fits in that small classification, for he would be remembered by his utterances if he had never accomplished anything, and, on the other hand, the manner in which he administered the affairs of the Nation was sufficiently outstanding in deeds that, had he never said anything, what he did would be sufficient for recognition. Mr. Lincoln, therefore, at once becomes rather an interesting study.

As a man identified with college work, I used to study his English. I was wonderfully impressed by the statement of a great rhetorician, a professor in one of our greatest universities, who said that Mr. Lincoln spoke the best English of any man in his day, and he followed him for a time in order to study it; and after one of his remarkable addresses the professor sought him out to ascertain whether he had any secret that would explain his great power. It seemed to have been greatly surprising to Mr. Lincoln to be told by a professor of rhetoric that he was speaking the best

English of any man living at the time, and when the professor asked him for his explanation, he said, "I did not know I had any powers of utterance at all."

Mr. Lincoln never had any education from the modern standpoint; he never owned a slate or slate pencil as a pupil, or a lead pencil or a piece of paper, but he would go to the fire for a piece of charcoal, which he would whittle to a point for his pencil, and then the fire shovel would serve as his slate, or he would go out and get a board, shave it smooth, and on that he would write or figure. I can see now this boy, as he has been described, as he was flat on his back on the floorless cabin, with his head next to the firelight where the pine knot was burning, studying under those inconvenient circumstances, and he would be an object of pity, and yet I am not far afield in my statement that there was the training that was ultimately to develop one of the most remarkable figures of all history.

In 1854 he was in the foreground of old Sangamon County and spoke to the populace on slavery. On that occasion he used this statement: "Broken by it I, too, may be; bow to it, I never will." Three years later he was endorsed for the position of Senator that was then occupied by Stephen A. Douglas; after the endorsement he was called to the front of the platform, and he made one of the finest political short speeches up to that time in our political history. It was in that speech that Mr. Lincoln used this expression: "A house divided against itself cannot stand. I believe that this Government cannot endure permanently half slave and half free," and he went on to argue the propo-

sition. Before he made that speech, he showed it to one of his best friends, and his friend said to him, "Abe, you must not do it." Mr. Lincoln said, "Why not?" "Why, it is revolutionary; you are announcing that the Government is not perpetual, and you cannot take such a position as that and survive," and Mr. Lincoln simply said this: "I believe that it is right; in the name of God, I think it is; if it is, I will say it, no matter what the consequences," and he said it. [Applause.] It was that paragraph that gave him recognition not only in our country, but it was quoted widely in Europe. That was in 1858.

Later on he came on with a debate with Douglas, seven of them. When Douglas submitted certain questions to Mr. Lincoln, Mr. Lincoln said, "I will answer them on condition that you will agree to let me ask you a similar number of questions, and you agree to answer mine." When Douglas agreed to that, he submitted his queries, Lincoln answered them, and then Lincoln submitted his, and there was one question which was to the effect of whether the people of a territory could, against the wish of any citizen, prevent the institution of slavery in the territory. The friends of Lincoln kept saying to him, "Don't press that question; if you do, you never can be elected to the United States Senate; Douglas will defeat you." Mr. Lincoln replied, "Douglas may defeat me, but if he ever answers that question yes or no, he will never be elected President of the United States, and I am after bigger game." [Applause.] That did not mean that Mr. Lincoln was after the Presidency, for, in 1859—

that is, a year later—a friend had written to him to urge him to take the Vice-Presidency, and Mr. Lincoln wrote back a very sincere letter saying, “I am not fit to be Vice-President of the United States;” so when Mr. Lincoln made that remarkable statement to his friend that Douglas would never be made President and he was after bigger game, he did not mean that he was after the Presidency, but that he was after Douglas, so that Douglas would not be elected to the Presidency.

Mr. Lincoln in time was nominated, and then comes the remarkable utterance at Washington in the first inaugural, but, prior to that, he made a trip, as you know, from Illinois through Indiana, Ohio, then on through New York and then down from New York to Trenton, Philadelphia, Harrisburg, and Washington, and this trip is a record of very brilliant utterances from this remarkable man; and one of the most beautiful utterances that he ever made was that made in this City of Brotherly Love out at the famous Independence Hall, where with his own hand he raised the American flag. That is one of the finest speeches we have in American literature. I recall that he stated that only so many years before the Declaration of Independence had been adopted in this Hall, and he then referred to the fact that his political philosophy comes from that instrument. Then he asks the question whether upon that principle this Nation can long endure. You remember his utterance in which he said, “If the Nation can be saved upon that principle, I shall be one of the happiest men in it; if it cannot, I was about to say I would rather be assassinated upon this

spot than to surrender." It was on this trip, during which he made so many short speeches, that he referred to the danger of war, and made a plea for the perpetuity of the Union, and his arguments were strong for the indestructible union of the States; and as he approached nearer and nearer to Washington, the strength of that spirit grew and grew; that was very noticeable.

Mr. Lincoln on the occasion of the dedication of the battlefield at Gettysburg made what is called the greatest short speech ever delivered in the English language. Members of The Union League, if you were at the British Museum now, you would be in the presence of the largest collection of books that can be found anywhere in the world, and if you were to ask the highest authority in English in the world for the finest short speech ever uttered, it would be handed to you, and it would read: "Four score and seven years ago our fathers brought forth on this continent a new nation, conceived in liberty and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal," and so on—it wouldn't take me three minutes to quote the whole speech. That does honor to Shakespeare or to Emerson or any master of the English Language, and yet it was uttered by the untrained, unlettered, and what the world called uneducated, Abraham Lincoln.

While that is called the high-water mark of Mr. Lincoln's utterances, I do not think it is; there is one other short speech that Mr. Lincoln delivered that I think is superior even to that, especially when you measure it by the standards that Emerson sets up, sentiment and chaste expression. Note: "Fondly do

we hope, fervently do we pray, that this mighty scourge of war may speedily pass away; yet if God wills that it continue till all the wealth that has been piled by the bondman's two hundred and fifty years of unrequited toil shall be sunk, and until every drop of blood drawn with the lash shall be paid by another drawn by the sword, as was said three thousand years ago, so still it must be said, 'The judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether.' 'With malice toward none'—who is saying that? Think of this picture, four years of bloody carnage during which the most terrific storms of abuse that ever blew were beating upon the brow of the President of the United States, called everything, and yet in the face of that, "With malice toward none, with charity for all, with firmness in the right, as God gives us to see the right, let us strive on to finish the work, to bind up the nation's wounds, to care for the fatherless," and so on. That is the second inaugural address, and in my judgment is the highest reach in English that any American has yet achieved.

Now, friends, I am asked the question, How do you account for it? This man had no education, he never studied rhetoric, there never was any training for this remarkable gift. There may be some explanations; in the first place, Lincoln always wanted to be understood, and he never cared specially to speak simply to be heard. He never used an involved sentence, he never employed a big word if a little one would do. Eighty per cent of Lincoln's words are monosyllables, and that cannot be said of any other American. He has been criticized on the basis that while he was expressive, he

was not rhetorical; that is true. For example, he said, "I dumped it into a hole." That is not rhetorical, but you know what he meant. Douglas was a rhetorician; he said, "I deposited it into a cavity," which of course is the same thing. Lincoln said, "I dug a ditch," but Douglas said, "I excavated a channel." Mr. Lincoln said, "My defeat by Douglas in 1858 was due to bad luck; I simply ran at the wrong time." Douglas said, "It was due to a strange, fortuitous combination of opportune contingencies that nobody could have foreseen." [Laughter.] In other words, no one ever was confused when Lincoln spoke, others wondered what Douglas meant. Here stands Douglas the master of rhetoric, here Abraham Lincoln the master of logic; Stephen A. Douglas eloquent in words, Abraham Lincoln eloquent in thought. Douglas said, "I don't care whether you vote slavery up or vote it down"; Lincoln said, "I care very much about what most people care most about; toil, work, earn bread, and then vote to say who shall eat it"—his reference to the institution of slavery. Douglas always attracted attention to the speaker; Lincoln always attracted attention to the issue. People would go out from the presence of Douglas saying, "What a wonderful orator is Douglas; I never knew his equal." Nobody ever said that of Lincoln, but they would go out from the presence of Lincoln and would be saying, "We must vote against slavery." Douglas spoke, died, and is forgotten; Lincoln spoke, passed on, and lives more now than yesterday and will continue to live. [Applause.]

When people say, How do you account for Lincoln?

I ask you, How do you account for Shakespeare—how do you account for Mozart, how do you account for the painters? You tell me, and I will try to throw some light upon this most remarkable transformation in all secular history, where the rough boy of the forest becomes the mightiest genius America ever saw.

Probably Mr. Lincoln's expressions came very largely from the books that he read. Those books were, first, the Bible; second, Shakespeare; third, Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress*; fourth, *Æsop's Fables*; and last, *Weems' Life of Washington*, every one couched in the finest English. And the lesson, men, for us, is that the growing, absorbing mind feeds best not upon many books but on a few great books; that is, in my judgment, the chief lesson in the study of Mr. Lincoln's powers in the use of English.

One of the finest addresses in American literature is the one he delivered at Cooper Union in 1860. There are many people still living who heard that address, and one of the most distinguished citizens of your city is authority for one of the most graphic descriptions of the address; I refer to Dr. Conwell, Russell H. Conwell. [Applause.] I had a friend who still lives who has described frequently that remarkable scene when William Cullen Bryant introduced Mr. Lincoln that night. Mr. Lincoln had never spoken to the East before, and he was somewhat embarrassed when he was introduced to that famous audience in Cooper Union. Some friend took four of his choice friends among the scholars of the metropolis out to hear Mr. Lincoln, and when he saw him, of whom he had read

with such gratification, and whom he had never seen before, when he saw this angular figure shambling across the platform, he said, "It is not possible; it is not possible; I did not suppose Mr. Lincoln looked like that." And he said when he sat down he noticed he crossed his legs, and both feet were flat on the floor at the same time. [Laughter.] And when he was introduced by the poet, William Cullen Bryant, who took occasion to pass a eulogy upon Seward of New York and Cameron of the State of Pennsylvania and Chase of Ohio, he referred to Lincoln and said, "But I introduce to you a distinguished citizen of the United States." When this tall, angular figure stepped out, he very much embarrassed the stranger who had taken his friends out to hear him when he said, "Mr. Cheerman." The poor fellow shook his head; he said, "No, not here; that might do out West, but not here." But he had not spoken more than four or five minutes until all that buffoonery that had appeared first was gone, and nothing in the way of criticism was felt by any hearer, and the only thing that could be heard was the tender voice of the speaker, and the sizzling of the gas that was burning in the jets, the quiet was so oppressive. Mr. Lincoln that night set out the issue as it had never been set out before and never since, and that speech is now regarded as the finest example of the balanced sentence in rhetoric that we have in American literature. And yet it comes from Abraham Lincoln; it is difficult to explain.

In my study of Mr. Lincoln, I took occasion to go to the various places where Mr. Lincoln had operated,

in fact, I thought it was fine to go to the places where he and Douglas had their debates, which I did when I was with the University of Chicago. Every time I would go into a town like that, I would hunt out somebody who had heard Mr. Lincoln, and over at Freeport, I found a retired Presbyterian minister who was very well preserved, and he had a very keen mind, and I asked him what his impression of Douglas was. He said, "The most wonderful orator I have ever heard, either before or since." Quite naturally I said, "What did he say?" and the gentleman hung his head, and with rather somewhat of embarrassment said, "Upon my honor, I cannot remember a thing that Douglas said." "Well, what about Lincoln?" "Oh, Lincoln was the funniest fellow I ever saw in my life," and then he proceeded to tell me what he did and what he said. There is the contrast, he could not remember a word Douglas said, but proceeded immediately to tell me what Lincoln said. He said, "I remember how he replied to Douglas on a matter that Douglas had become very eloquent on, and he said, complimenting Douglas, 'Douglas is the most wonderful orator I have ever heard, and you will never hear his superior; why, to-night he proved there was not a shadow of a difference between a chestnut horse and a horse chestnut.'" [Laughter.]

Over at Quincy, I found a family that had heard the debate, and the gentleman said, "The thing that impressed me was not so much what Lincoln said as his attitude on the platform. At this place he had driven a long distance to get here, and he wore a long

linen duster, and while Douglas was speaking, Lincoln retained that duster with it buttoned to the last button. We didn't think much about that, but when Douglas finished, and took his seat and Lincoln was introduced by his chairman, we were somewhat astonished to see Lincoln step out without removing the duster. He looked one of the tallest figures you ever saw, and he proceeded for about fifteen minutes, and then, having warmed up, he began to unbutton this thing, talking right on, and turned toward his chairman, calling him Jake, and as he slipped the duster off, he said, 'Jake, hold this thing until I stone Stephen.' "[Laughter.]

Some one afterward asked him why he did those funny things on the platform. Lincoln said, "What funny things?" and the man said, "Why, did you notice to-night, you pulled up a high-backed chair in front of you and threw one foot over it and stood on one foot; I just wondered why you did that." Lincoln said, "Well, I don't know much, but I know enough never to begin on an audience that Douglas has left until I get them away from Douglas," and if you study these debates, you will find that Mr. Lincoln never lost an audience.

After the first debate, at the close of the first debate, Mr. Lincoln's supporters were so wonderfully hilarious that they literally picked him up bodily on their shoulders and carried him away. Douglas referred to that the next night. These debates were not on successive nights; they would be nearly a week apart, and then in the meantime, the other intervening

evenings, Lincoln would be some place and Douglas some other place speaking in the campaign. Douglas referred to this fact that the friends of Lincoln carried him off, but he did it in a very offensive way; he said Lincoln was so used up after the first debate that his friends had to carry him to his hotel. Lincoln was not pleased with that joke, because it seemed to be told as a matter of fact, and at the very next meeting Lincoln referred to that, and he issued this challenge, "If Douglas does not publicly here in my presence apologize for that mis-statement, I will pick him up bodily at the close of this debate and carry him to his hotel and put him to bed," which he would have done. So it behooved Douglas, in a comical manner, to refer to the thing as merely amusement, and say that he was surprised that Lincoln took it seriously. Those debates ended giving rank to Mr. Lincoln as probably the greatest outstanding political thinker of our day, and it was not long after those debates that he was regarded as our foremost leader.

The question has been asked, What is the real secret of Mr. Lincoln's position? I talked one time with Charles A. Dana, the editor of the *Sun*, because I wanted him to write an article developing the sympathetic leadership of Mr. Lincoln, in view of the fact that Dana was Assistant Secretary of War and knew him better than any one else, and was more capable of properly appraising him than any one else; he was editor of the *Sun*, and probably as great an editor as lived at the time. Mr. Dana said, "I can do nothing more than merely collect the numerous articles that

have appeared from time to time, but I never can write a life of Mr. Lincoln." Before I got away, Mr. Dana gave me two or three very significant statements about this leader. When I asked him what in his judgment was Lincoln's greatest power, his reply instantly was, "His control of men." I suggested that Lincoln did not completely control the men about him; Mr. Dana immediately refuted it; he said, "Yes, he did, he completely controlled them." Then I said, "He certainly did not control Stanton, Edwin M. Stanton." "Oh, yes, he did; you judge him just like everybody else, from the noise that Stanton made, while Lincoln would let Stanton blow and storm until he blew out, and then he was putty in his fingers."

Mr. Dana gave me two or three very interesting original incidents that I had never seen in print. One of them was in reference to the second election of Mr. Lincoln. Dana said he was with the President that evening; the President was reading the comical stories of Petroleum V. Nasby when Whitelaw Reid came in, and Dana said he withdrew and went into an adjoining room where Stanton was, and when he got in there, Stanton was walking the floor, angry as he could be. He said, "What is the matter, Mr. Secretary?" and Stanton turned around and, pointing toward Lincoln in the adjoining room, said, "Look there, there sits the man around whom the heartstrings of this Nation are wrapped this moment, being amused over a damned mountebank." Dana said that at that particular moment Lincoln was leaning back against the wall with his left heel over the top rung of the chair and

his right leg thrown over his left knee; he was lying back, mouth wide open, convulsed with laughter over something he had just read, and with his left leg sticking straight out like that he was a peculiar figure to look upon, "being amused over a damned mountebank." Dana said, "Lincoln heard it, for as quickly as he said it, Lincoln turned and looked at us, and then he said, 'Secretary Stanton.' 'What is it, Mr. President?'" 'Have you ever read anything by Petroleum Nasby?' Stanton here said, 'Nasby? Nasby? No, I haven't time for such buncombe as that.' 'Well, here is some buncombe you may enjoy. Listen, Nasby says there three kinds of fools, there is a natural fool, then there is an educated fool, and when you take a natural fool and try to educate him, you have got a damn fool.' " I asked the editor whether Stanton enjoyed the joke, and he said he never cracked a smile. [Laughter.]

Mr. Dana said that at another time he was talking with the President when Congressman Thomas of Baltimore came in and Thomas told this story, that down in Baltimore it had been discovered that a blanket manufactory had been manufacturing and selling blankets to the Confederacy. When Stanton learned of it, he ordered everybody connected with it imprisoned for treason, including the workmen. Thomas was appealed to, by all the friends of the workmen especially, until he finally went down to see the President, and he came while Dana was with him. Lincoln listened to Thomas' story and then, Dana said, in that inimitable tone of his, he said, "Well, Thomas, if those people were making blankets and selling them to the Confederacy, that

is treason, and what are you complaining about?" Thomas said, "Mr. President, the workmen—you mean that the workmen are traitors too?" Lincoln looked up, and he said, "Has he got the workmen in, too?" Thomas said, "Yes, he has got them all in." "Well," Lincoln said, "there must be some mistake about that; tell Stanton to come in here." Dana said that was a suggestion that something had happened. Stanton was summoned and Mr. Lincoln broke out and said, "Mr. Secretary, they say that the old sow down in Baltimore has eaten up all her pigs." Stanton said, "Mr. President, I don't understand your language." Mr. Lincoln said, "You do have some trouble to understand me once in a while, don't you? Well, they tell me you have got the whole business back of the bars down in Baltimore." Mr. Stanton said, "Do you refer to the blanket business?" "Yes, that is what I mean." "Yes, I have," and Lincoln said, "The workmen, too?" and the Secretary said, "Mr. President, you are the law in this matter; if you do not endorse what I have done, you can countermand it, but if I am to be held responsible for the War Department, I hope you will realize the situation." Mr. Lincoln stood on his feet, Mr. Dana said it was a tense moment, and what he said to the Secretary was few in words but could have no double meaning. Mr. Stanton simply said, "Well, Mr. President, if you do not endorse what I have done, countermand it; is that all you wanted to see me about? I am awfully busy, can I be excused?" Lincoln said, "I will excuse you, I thank you for coming in; good-bye," and as quickly as he got out Lincoln turned to

Thomas and said, "Thomas, if you were at the head of a business and had a clerk like that fellow, what would you do with him?" Thomas, angry, said, "I would dismiss him and get somebody that had some civility." Listen to Lincoln: "No, you would not, not if your business was as important as my business, and not if your clerk was an Edwin M. Stanton. He is all right, I understand him; the trouble is he don't understand himself; I will get along. Call Holt." Then Judge Holt of Kentucky was brought in—this is Dana's story—and when Holt came in, Lincoln said to Holt, "Go down to Baltimore with Thomas, and get up a Court and let those fellows out; he will tell you about it; don't ask me any questions; go on." And he did, and when this matter came to the attention of Stanton, Holt of course was called on the carpet. Holt told him that the President ordered it, and the Secretary said, "Did Lincoln order you to do that?" "He did." Stanton hesitated for a moment, and then in rather bitter anger said, "Holt, we have got to get rid of this baboon in the White House." When that came to the attention of Lincoln from somebody, very angry, who said, "I would not endure his insults," Lincoln said, "Insults—he did not insult me, all he said was that I was a baboon, and that is only a matter of opinion, sir." Now, note, he further added, "My only concern is that Stanton is usually right." What would have been the attitude of the average man in the White House with the type of man that Stanton was? And yet, Members of this patriotic League, the time came when the President was breathing his last, that at the

head of the bed stood this figure, Edwin M. Stanton, the virtual head of the Government, and when at seven o'clock and twenty-two minutes on the 15th of April, 1865, Lincoln went home, the silence of death was broken by none other than Edwin M. Stanton, when, speaking over the bed-rail with his hand pointed toward the dead chief, he said, "Now, he belongs to the ages." That was Edwin M. Stanton. In other words, the two men were different in type, both patriotic to the core, each appreciating the other.

When Stanton was appointed to take the position made vacant by Simon Cameron being sent to Russia as Minister, protest came in to Lincoln against Stanton, because Stanton had not voted for Lincoln. Stanton had been attached to the preceding administration as a Democrat. One man said, "Mr. President, this is a mistake." Mr. Lincoln said, "I met Stanton in a law suit, I felt his mettle, he is a great secretary and that is why I appointed him." "But," they said, "you are the first President of the new party, and you must not unbalance the Cabinet." Mr. Lincoln said, "Well, save the country first, and then we will build the party out of what is left." [Applause.]

When William H. Seward, as you recall, declined to state to President Lincoln whether he would accept the portfolio of State after it had been offered to him the very first one—and he declined up to nine o'clock on the morning of the 4th of March and Lincoln had to have a definite statement that morning, and Seward finally agreed—his declination was on the basis that of the seven members of the Cabinet Lincoln was

appointing four old time Democrats and only three Whigs, and they said, "Mr. President, you are unbalancing this Cabinet." Lincoln said, "Why, Seward, you don't seem to count me at all; I am in the Cabinet."

What a wonderful man—take him on any angle. I have the practice of reading some new book on Mr. Lincoln every year, and one of the best that I have seen is an analysis of Lincoln as a master of men; and if you will go through that and see how he dealt with McClellan—and what an awful thorn in the flesh he was—how he dealt with Salmon T. Chase from my State, who thought he was so much bigger than Lincoln that Lincoln ought to condescend to him; how he dealt with William H. Seward who nine months after the inauguration wrote Lincoln, "We have been in office for nine months and no policy yet announced. If the President prefers to allow some member of his Cabinet to announce a policy, while I do not seek it, I would not run away from it"—it is almost incredible; how Lincoln dealt with Stanton—listen, friends, there was one of the greatest Cabinets that any President ever formed, at the same time every one of them, thinking himself vastly superior to the Chief, came to the point ultimately when they were mere boys in contrast with the Chief, and they learned to know that before it went far. There is the most remarkable figure, judged by the place whence he came and the heights that he reached, that I know of in all history, and as we further study his character from day to day it simply looms as difficult to explain.

I think one thing that gave Lincoln his great hold

was the combination of those two qualities, good humor and this wonderful depth of pathos. In the first place, he was probably one of the funniest men in public life. I spent a day this year over in New Salem; Salem is the place where Lincoln lived from 1831 to 1837. Ultimately the whole town was moved down to St. Petersburg, about two miles from it, and some public-spirited man supplied the money to buy the entire town site, and he donated it to an organization out there in the hope that it might be rebuilt. Just now it has been passed over into the possession of the State, and the State has obligated itself to build a museum, which it has, and now to undertake to replace all of the twenty-three houses that were standing when Mr. Lincoln lived there. I was in the place one whole day talking with the local historian there, who knew very much about Mr. Lincoln, and I got some side glances of his life that I had never come across. One was this incident that introduced him in that town: Soon after he came there, there was an election day, and the boss of the town, the factotum of the town, who was the lawyer and teacher and storekeeper and so on, was told that this long, angular newcomer by the name of Abe Lincoln could write. So this storekeeper went out and called Lincoln and said, "Can you write, young man?" He said, "I can make some rabbit tracks." He said, "Come in here," and Mr. Lincoln went in and served as clerk of that election. He got out a chart—he made a chart; that indicated at once that he was not only a good penman, but that he had some ideas, and as the people would come in slowly to vote, Mr. Lincoln in

the meantime would tell stories, and that one day was enough to introduce Mr. Lincoln to that whole community, and from then on he became quite a figure; and at a very early age, as you recall, 1832, the very next year after he came there, he ran for the Legislature and had the distinction of being defeated; and in 1834 he ran and was elected. Then there appeared in the Legislature nine men all about as tall as Mr. Lincoln but not quite. Lincoln, you know, boasted that he was six feet four in his stocking feet at the age of seventeen; so when he was going through to the East one time some one in a certain town where he stopped told him that there was a man there living that claimed he was taller than he was. When Mr. Lincoln was introduced to speak, he referred to that, and looked over the audience to see if he could find the man; he saw some fellow standing head and shoulders above every one else, and said, "Is it you? Come up here." They shoved him up, and when this fellow climbed up on the rear end of the platform of the car and stood by Lincoln, Lincoln said so everybody could hear him, "Oh, I could lick salt off the top of your head"—just a sample of his humor.

One time when he was in a debate with Douglas, Douglas was holding to the point that the tariff was a local issue—he didn't use the term "local issue" but he said the tariff must be applied to the place and time; it is like a man's legs, it must be suited to his body. When Mr. Lincoln came to reply, he referred to this sort of argument, when some one broke out and said to Mr. Lincoln, "How long should a man's legs be?"

Mr. Lincoln, as quick as a flash, said, "They ought to reach from his body down to the ground." [Laughter.]

His humor was a staying quality. I think one of the best incidents that I ever heard was in connection with three men who sought a postoffice, and the third time they came Mr. Lincoln lost his patience. He was talking with Dana—this is another of Dana's stories—he was talking with Dana and he saw these three persons coming, and he said, "There they come again; this is the third time they have been here; they want a postoffice—I don't know whether it is in Missouri, I don't even know where it is; it won't pay a hundred and fifty dollars a year; it don't make any difference whether Tom, Dick or Harry has it," and was running on just like that. Finally Dana broke in and said, "Well, Mr. President, you are not going to see them again, are you?" "Oh, yes, I will have to see them." Just about that time the man in charge of the room said, "Mr. President, there are three men from the West here to see you; what shall I say to them?" "Bring them in, give them seats right here." Then he turned to Dana and said, "Now, wait, Dana, we are going to have some fun." When they came in, Mr. Lincoln saluted them and then said, "Sit down until I finish this story I was about to tell Mr. Dana." He was not about to tell him anything. Then he said, "Dana, as I was about to say when they came in, I think I was about fifteen at the time, and our habit was on Sunday afternoon to meet in church, and we had a Sunday School; we would read sometimes from the Old Testament and sometimes from the New

Testament; at this particular time we were reading from the Old Testament—just excuse me, gentlemen, a few minutes, I will be through in a little while—There was one fellow in the class who never could read except by the assistance of the teacher; the teacher did not want to embarrass him, so he always helped him through. As I recall, he was reading something like this—it was in Kings or Judges, I don't know, it was about the Hebrew children—just excuse me, gentlemen, a few minutes, and I will be through. And as I recall, he read like this: 'A part of the'—'Kingdom'—'kingdom was to be'—'Ruled'—'ruled over by'—'Read on—Shadrach' 'Shadrach' 'Next word, Meshach' 'Meshach' and—'Abednego' 'Abednego.' Just excuse me, gentlemen a minute. Then the first fellow read it at the head of the class, then the next and then the next, and then when it came down to the foot of the class the teacher said to this fellow, 'Now, you read that 14th verse'—it was the same verse: 'And a part of the kingdom was ruled over by—' Well, if there don't come those three goldurned fools again." [Laughter.] The leader of the group said, "Mr. President, I see you are busy to-day; we will come some other time," and the minute they got out, Lincoln turned to Dana and said, "Didn't we fetch them this time?" [Laughter.]

That is one side of Lincoln; it is the side you read most about. I do not know of any public character that has so many stories attached to him. Many of them do not belong to him, but they are so Lincolnesque that people say immediately, "That is Lincoln's story."

The other side is equally well developed; it is that very sad, pathetic side. I do not know any public character whose life seemed to touch the depths like this one. It seemed that everything developed it. Over in Springfield I was told by a person who said he could vouch for it that at one time the clerk in the meat market delivered some meat to the home of Mr. Lincoln. Mrs. Lincoln had asked for a choice bit, and she looked at it before the merchant went out and it was not what she ordered, and she made quick work of it—it is stated that she threw it at him. When he went to Mr. Lincoln about it, he said, “Oh, Jake, can’t you stand it once when I stand it all the time?”

There are so many incidents about Mr. Lincoln’s sadness that it is difficult for one to know how much to say. I think that the most superb of all the qualities of this man were displayed in his relationship with Anne Rutledge, his first love. It is really too sacred to be dealt with in a public audience. When I was over at New Salem this summer and asked to go to the grave of Anne Rutledge, it was only for the reason that frequently Mr. Lincoln would come in in the morning and Judge Logan, his partner, would say, “What is wrong, Abe—what is the matter?” And he would say, “Don’t criticise, don’t think me weak, but I have been on her grave all night.” The body has been taken from the cemetery in the country where it was first buried and is now sleeping in a beautiful cemetery up at Petersburg, and when you read the headstone, it is one of the most touching that any one could find anywhere. It represents Anne Rutledge speaking out of

the grave, referring to the love existing between her and the great leader; but, as I say, it is too sacred to be displayed, although it is put on a film, and I am told, while I have never seen it, that it is very difficult for one to sit through and be able to see it, because your eyes won't look.

One of the most touching incidents in the life of Lincoln refers to his frequent visits out at the Soldiers' Home here at Washington. It was used during the war as a hospital. As you know, he had spent most of the day one day going through talking to the boys who were brought in, and when he went out and got in the carriage, some one rushed to him, a guard, and stated to one of the Cabinet members, and it was overheard by Lincoln, "There is a Confederate soldier in the compartment who is dying and he knew that the President was here and he asked to see him." Mr. Lincoln overheard this and immediately told them to wait. He went back with the guard, and when he was led to the cot, the poor fellow wanted to ask forgiveness of the President. The President asked him, "What can I do for you?" and he said, "I heard you were here; the surgeon says I cannot get well; I wanted to see you." The President said, "What can I do for you?" He said, "I wanted to ask you to forgive me for my part in the war." The President said, "Ask God, my poor boy, to forgive you; of course, I will forgive you, but ask Him to forgive you." Then he stooped and took the dying Confederate's hand in his two hands and said to him, "I have been here much of the day; I must go; is there anything more I can do for you?"

The poor fellow said, "Oh, I thought, if you didn't mind, you might stay and see me through," and as the President stood there holding this Confederate's hand in his two hands the tears were dropping upon his coat sleeve. There is the most beautiful picture in American history, the President of the mightiest Republic of the world weeping over a dying soldier who had done all he could to clip the brittle thread upon which the life of the Nation was then hanging. If I could paint, I would seize a moment in Lincoln's life—and that would be the moment—when I thought he was probably as great as at any moment in his life.

Now, friends, I have not said anything about Mr. Lincoln as the Emancipator; that is well known; my thought mostly has been on Mr. Lincoln as the preserver of the Nation, for this is true, that America is the solution of popular government of the world. Greece went down in anarchy because of too much liberty in the States; Rome went down in monarchy because of too much power at the head. America undertook to solve the problem of popular government without too much power in the center, endangered by monarchy, or too much liberty in the States, endangered by anarchy. It was Washington who inaugurated it, Lincoln who saved it, and I want to say as a student of political science that in the light of the struggles of the past—I mean in all history—that with the American system of a strong central authority at Washington to maintain order, and at the same time local self-government and rights of the States to maintain liberty, with that perfect balance, with the preser-

vation of both of them, you are never in danger either of monarchy or of anarchy. America is the solution of that problem which has been greatest in the history of governments in the world. The close of the Civil War, in the preservation of this Union with the full retention of local rights in the States, and still constitutional supremacy at the head of the Nation is the greatest event in the history of civil government since the morning stars sang together, and the credit goes to Abraham Lincoln. [Applause.]

So it is not so much Lincoln the Emancipator that I am speaking of to-night; it is Lincoln the human figure, that could not be swept off his feet by the charges of such men as Wendell Phillips or William Lloyd Garrison, who had no use for him because he would not immediately respond to the abolition of slavery. Neither would he go to the other extreme, but in some way, this man with prescient genius seemed to know what was dangerous, that must not materialize, and at the same time what was essential, that must be realized.

There is not a man here and probably no one living who can properly estimate the value in the world of the leadership of Abraham Lincoln; nor will there be in a thousand years from now. You ask, How do you account for it? I do not know. Gentlemen, if Abraham Lincoln was not guided by a Providential power, then there is no Providence in the affairs of men. [Applause.] The qualities that the man displayed that are eternal were faith in humanity and belief that there was more good in the world than bad. He believed

that in a struggle between right and wrong right ultimately will win; he never had any fear of the outcome. Oh, I could stand here by the hour and quote you statements of his that showed his faith in the people. I could also quote you utterance after utterance that showed his abiding faith in God.

Gentlemen, Lincoln's was the most profoundly religious nature that ever occupied the Presidential chair; nobody ever approached him in that devotion. When Noah Brooks said to him, "Mr. President, some of your friends have been discussing whether you pay any attention to your obligations to your God," he said, "Why, Professor, I spend more time in thinking of my obligations to my Maker than upon all other questions combined." That is Lincoln.

So if we wanted to analyze the man—and the public is coming to try to analyze him, because he is looming larger from year to year, such a figure that explanation does not give light—as people are studying him, they are trying to discover the qualities that make him the figure that he is. Faith in humanity and faith in the God of us all are the two abiding qualities of the increasingly powerful name of Abraham Lincoln.

When he left Illinois, his old friend Dennis Hanks—a very close relationship there—said to him, "Abe, the thing that hurts me more than anything else is that we have lived together; you have taken one course and I another; you have become President of the Nation, I am still here just what I was when we started, and while I am not finding fault with that, the thing I deplore is that I am losing the best friend I ever had."

Lincoln said, "Now, don't, Dennis, don't talk that way. I will go to Washington, I will serve my term, I will return either to Springfield or Chicago and practice law, and when I do return the first person I want to see is you. Now, don't talk about losing your best friend." Mr. Lincoln's body was taken back to Springfield; Dennis Hanks was eighteen miles in the country; he walked the distance in and went and took his place in the great concourse of people as they were passing the bier—he was a stout figure, a rather unusual one to look upon, and as he came up there was something about his stride that caught the attention of the guard who, of course, closely guarded the body; instead of his passing on as the others, he stopped like this and the guards hesitated and they heard him say, "Yes, Abe, you promised me you would come back and you did come back, but I did not expect you to come this way." Then he was led on; that was his boyhood friend.

I cannot say good-night to you, gentlemen, without saying this much: We have very serious problems confronting the Nation that Lincoln saved; I think we have never had more serious problems. Of course, we are apt to magnify the importance of anything that immediately faces us, and it might be the humor of public men to think that the problems facing us at the time are more difficult than ever before, but we have very serious problems. We have the financial problem, where before the war the debt was less than a billion and it jumped to twenty-six billions, and we were put under very heavy burdens of taxation, that have per-

sisted and must persist as long as the debt is to be cared for, which is indefinite. Would I be in order—I think I would—if I say that when the present Secretary of the Treasury took over the problem, we had three billions of dollars, called a floating debt, that was unfunded, not in the form of bonds. We had the others in the form of bonds, and the public did not realize that the three billion dollars that floated, due at any time—the Government required the banks to carry it—the public did not realize that with the banks compelled to carry the three billion dollars of Government obligations due at any time the banks were thus deprived of loaning that money to industry, which would have amounted to seven billion dollars commercial credit; and because the banks were deprived of that, industry starved and labor went out of employment, interest rates went high, as re-discount rates did, and banking became difficult. The first thing the Secretary of the Treasury did was this: He said, "We must revive industry; to do it, we must make capital fluid, banking must be in condition where industry can borrow at a reasonable rate, therefore we must relieve the banks of carrying these Government obligations, and we will try the public," and he announced it; he offered a half billion to the public for three years at five and three-quarters. It was over-subscribed and in nine months he was offering short-term certificates for four and a half, one and a quarter rate of interest less, and in a short time the three billion of dollars were funded in short-term certificates, absorbed by the public, and banking liquid assets released for industry.

Money began to flow to industry, interest rates came down, re-discount rates came down and labor was employed; Liberties went from 81.07 to 100. Then the Secretary of the Treasury saw four billion fifty million Victory notes due May, 1923; he said, "We will try this same thing and see whether we can float these notes we cannot pay and put them at convenient dates of maturities, so that they can be paid or cared for when due." He started it at quarterly periods, and it was not long before the four billion and fifty million were taken up and refunded at convenient maturities, and done in such a way that even the business of the country never felt it. Now, I say, gentlemen, without offering any eulogistic utterances on behalf of anybody, that the financing of the Treasury's obligations by the present Secretary of the Treasury marks him the equal of any figure in America outside of Alexander Hamilton [applause], and whatever he recommends on the matter of tax reduction, his prestige and what he has done guarantees that it is sound. [Applause.]

Now, I thought that although this is a Lincoln occasion, I ought to say that much about one of the very serious problems that we are battling with right now in Washington. We are not going to be able to pass the bill as prepared—I am awful sorry, because it is sound and it ought to pass, but unfortunately there has been a prejudice developed, and it is called the rich man's measure, which is a foolish statement, for it is not that at all.

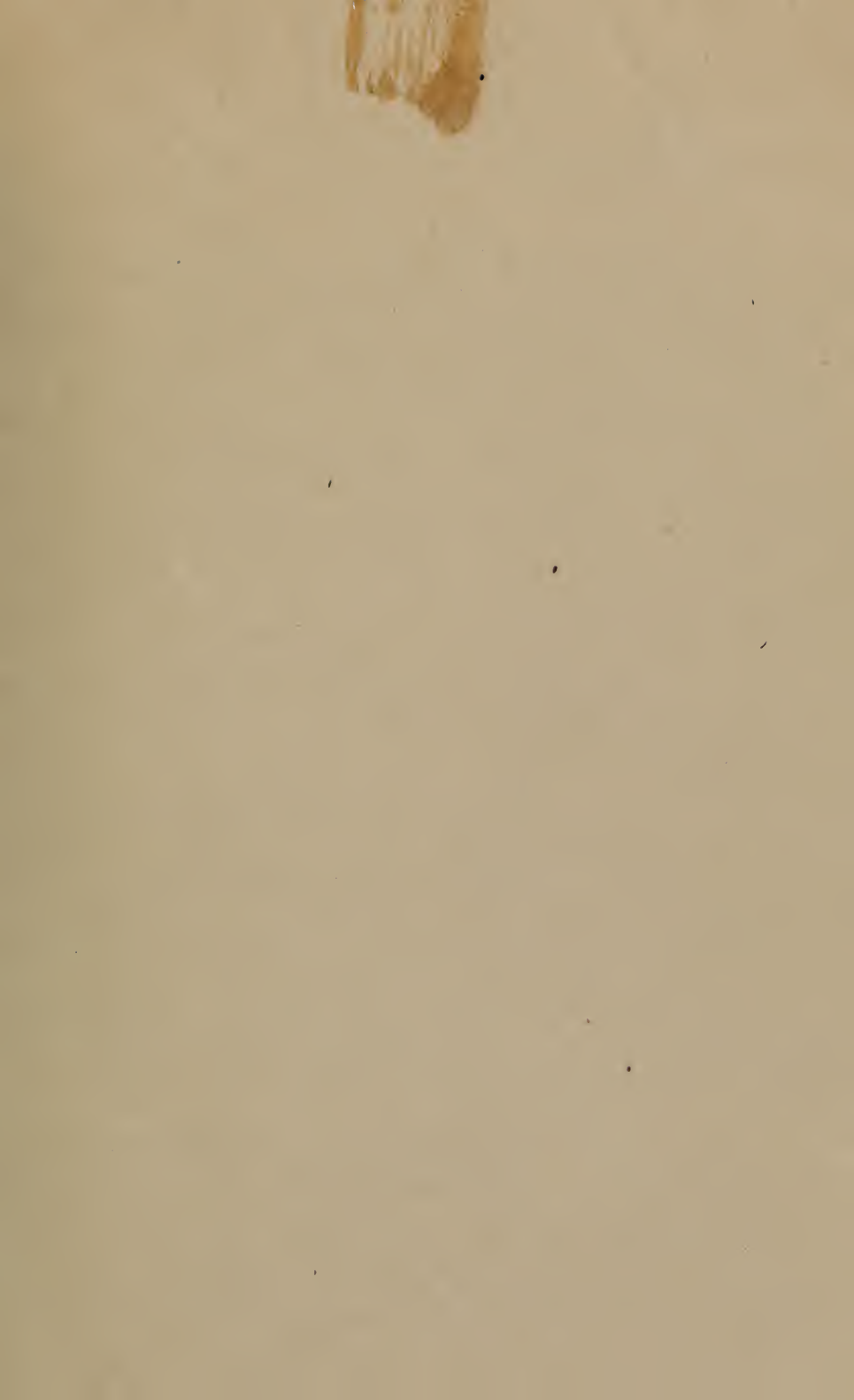
That is one problem; we have others. One thing

that is distressing everybody desperately is a matter that I need not say more than this about: The Government will go to the bottom of everything that has the label of suspicion; it will go to the bottom in the interest of the public, let the chips hit wherever they fly, on behalf of the public interest, and no matter how big or little the person who is hit may be.

While I probably might be out of order if I would say anything specially about the presiding officer of the Nation, I am sure that I will be permitted to say that that man Coolidge, not too outspoken but thoughtful, never moving except when right and never flinching for a minute, has more goods on the shelf and less in the showcase than any man I ever met in my life. [Applause.] And I do not go afield when I say he possesses many of the qualities of our beloved Abraham Lincoln, many of the simple qualities. I do not want to go into any comparison—that is out of order now—but we are pretty safe, friends, with that sort of leadership; and with the problems facing us, and with the Lincoln background, with the anti-Government movements that are more or less fed by this spirit of suspicion now dominating Washington, where it seems to be the open season for skunks [applause]—with that spirit abroad, do not overlook the fact that we have got the greatest Government the sun ever shone upon, we have got the happiest people, we have the most honest people, we have people of the greatest integrity, we have honest officials in the main, and I am sure, my friends, that there is a great future for our great country. And as Abraham Lincoln gave his last full

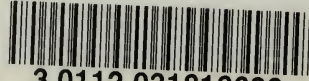
measure of devotion to this land, I know that the membership of The Union League, a group of men that I would rather address on an occasion like this than any other group of men that I can think of anywhere in America—I know that the membership of The Union League will join with me in a re-baptism to a greater devotion to America and what she stands for, that this Government of the people, for the people, and by the people shall not perish from the earth. I thank you. [Loud and prolonged applause.]

THE PRESIDENT: Gentlemen, it is very evident that we have listened to a great and deep student of the man the anniversary of whose birth we are celebrating. His reference to our great President and the Secretary of the Treasury has met with a hearty response in this audience. Secretary Mellon, I would like to say for his information, is an honored member of The Union League. Now, Senator Fess, on behalf of The Union League, may I express our appreciation for your very eloquent and illuminating address. We are greatly indebted to you, indeed. [Applause.]





UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS-URBANA
973.7L63GF42A C001
ABRAHAM LINCOLN. PHILA



3 0112 031818690